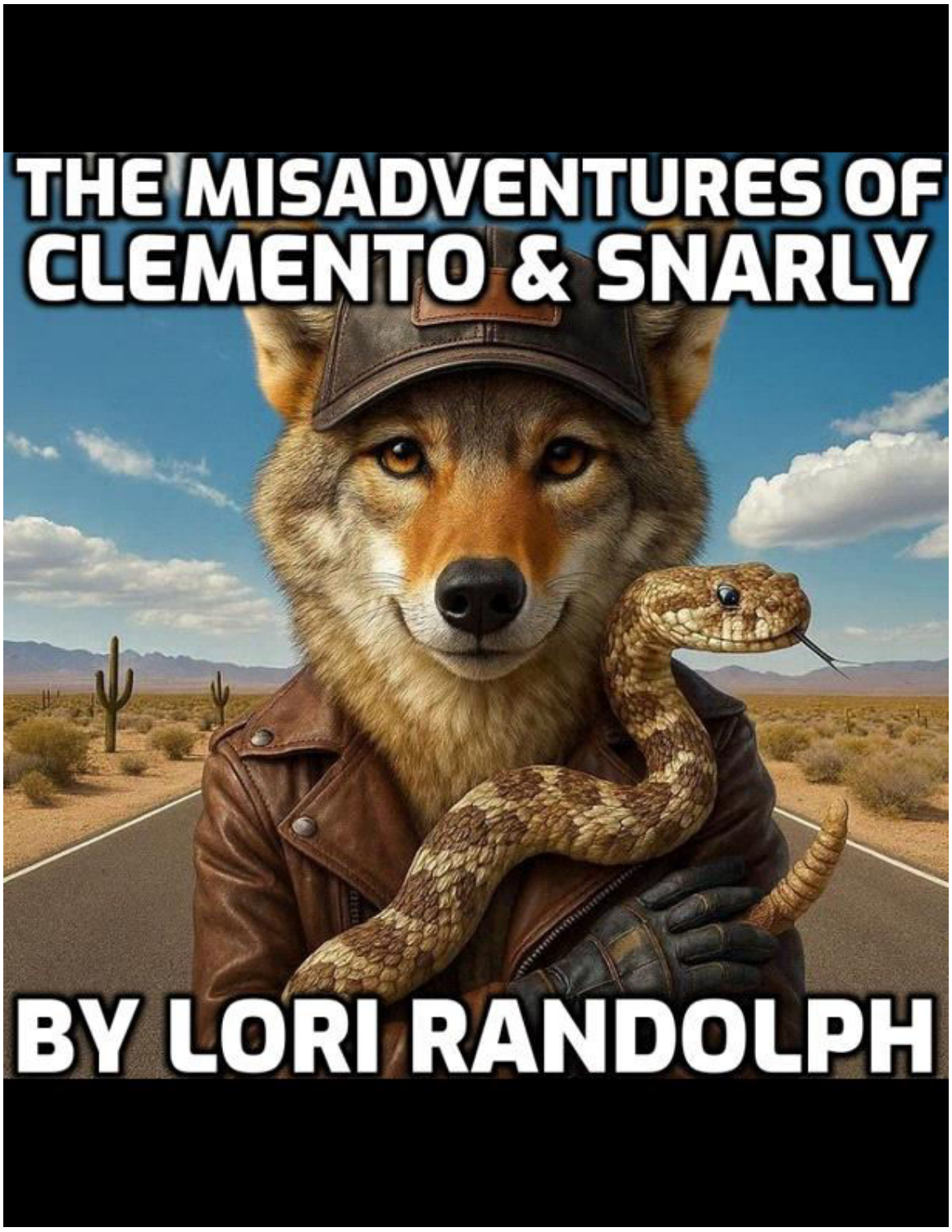
THE MISADVENTURES OF
CLEMENTO & SNARLY
BY LORI RANDOLPH

Clemento adjusted his leather jacket, the desert sun glinting off his shades as he looked at the empty town square. With the three donkeys finally gone, the "law" was officially out of town.

“It’s showtime, Snarly,” Clemento growled, his voice a low rumble of both brains and muscle. He reached down and let the rattlesnake coil around his arm like a living weapon.

The Plan

Clemento didn’t just want to cause a mess; he wanted to dominate. His first stop was the town’s main water tower. While most would just break the locks, Clemento used his strength to bend the iron ladder, making it impossible for anyone else to climb.

Clemento leaned against the town’s only stop sign, spitting a toothpick out the side of his mouth. He adjusted his leather collar and looked down at Snarly, who was coiled tightly around his forearm.

"Yo, Snarly, get a load of this," Clemento growled in a thick, gravelly Bronx accent. "Hogg and Dapple finally hit the bricks. They’re outta town, see? The coast is clear. No more 'hee-hawing' lawmen breathin' down our necks for five minutes."

Snarly hissed, his rattle vibrating with excitement.

"Yeah, yeah, I hear ya," Clemento said, cracking his knuckles. "Now listen up, 'cause I'm the brains of this outfit and the muscle, capiche? We ain't just knockin' over trash cans today. We're gonna give this one-horse town a real Bronx welcome."

He stomped toward the Sheriff's station, his heavy boots echoing on the pavement.

"Step one," Clemento commanded, pointing a claw at a tiny vent near the foundation. "You slide in there, Snarly. Get into Hogg’s desk and shred every ticket he’s ever written. Make it look like a confetti parade in there. Me? I’m gonna take the front door off the hinges just to show 'em who’s boss."

As Snarly disappeared into the shadows, Clemento let out a loud, menacing laugh that echoed through the empty desert. "They think they’re tough? They ain't seen nothin' yet. By the time them donkeys get back, they’re gonna wish they stayed on vacation!"

Clemento kicked open the swinging doors of "The Dusty Pocket" pool hall. He didn't just walk in; he owned the air in the room. He adjusted his leather jacket and looked around the dim, smoky hall with a sneer.

"Yo, look at this dump, Snarly," Clemento barked, his Bronx accent cutting through the silence like a jagged blade. "Place is deader than a Sunday in Brooklyn. Without Hogg and Dapple sniffin' around, these mooks don't even know how to have a good time. It’s pathetic, capiche?"

Snarly slithered down Clemento’s arm and onto the green felt of the lead table, his rattle making a sound like a ticking time bomb.

"Ey, watch the felt, kid! That's a professional surface," Clemento joked, though his eyes remained cold and menacing. He grabbed a cue stick, testing its weight before snapping it over his knee like a toothpick. "Too light. I need somethin' with a bit of 'forget-about-it' behind it."

The air in "The Dusty Pocket" was thick with the scent of chalk and fear. Clemento, the brains and muscle, had just snapped a cue stick to make a point. A burly coyote at the back of the room stood up, his chair scraping against the floor like a challenge.

"You got a lot of nerve comin' in here, wolf," the coyote spat.

Clemento’s eyes narrowed into slits. He stepped forward, his leather jacket creaking. "You talkin' to me?" he growled in a thick Bronx accent. "I said, you want a piece of me? 'Cause I got plenty to go around, capiche? I'm gonna take you apart like a cheap suit from a bargain bin!"

He balled his paws into fists, ready to show off the muscle that backed up his big talk. But just as he was about to swing, a sharp, metallic rattle filled the room.

Snarly’s Warning

Snarly slithered up Clemento's shoulder, his tail vibrating with a frantic intensity. He hissed a low, urgent warning directly into the wolf's ear.

"Ixnay on the fight-nay, Clemento!" Snarly whispered. "You forgettin' about Sheriff Hogg and the new guy? One more bust and we’re done for!"

Clemento froze, his fist inches from the coyote’s snout. "The new guy?" he muttered back.

"Yeah!" Snarly hissed. "Judge Juniper! He's a donkey who don't play. He told Hogg if he has to arrest you one more time, he's throwin' away the key to the town jail and sendin' us to the

rock pile for good. We gotta be smart, boss. Use the brains!"

The Pivot

Clemento took a deep breath, smoothing down his leather lapels. He forced a menacing smirk, though his heart was racing.

"You're lucky, kid," Clemento said to the confused coyote, pointing a finger at his chest. "My associate here reminds me I got a very important meetin'. But don't think I'm forgettin' your face. I'm keepin' tabs, see?"

He turned on his heel, Snarly tucked safely back in his jacket. "Come on, Snarly. Let's get outta this dump before Sheriff Hogg and Judge Juniper decide to cut their vacation short. We gotta find a way to cause trouble that don't leave a paper trail."

Clemento was pacing the length of the pool hall, his Bronx attitude red-lining. That’s when the front doors didn't just open—they groaned. In stepped a massive wild boar named Gully, smelling of swamp water and bad intentions. He made the mistake of bumping right into Clemento’s shoulder.

Clemento didn’t skip a beat. He spun around, his leather jacket flaring out like wings.

"Hey! Watch it, ya ham-on-hooves!" Clemento barked, his Bronx accent louder than the jukebox. "You just stepped on a custom Italian leather boot! You want a piece of me? Huh? 'Cause I’ll turn you into a rack of ribs before you can blink, capiche?!"

Clemento puffed out his chest, the muscle ready to explode. Gully the Boar lowered his tusks, scraping a hoof against the floor. The whole room held its breath.

The Narrow Escape

Just as Clemento pulled back a fist to start the brawl of the century, Snarly went into a full-blown rattle. He surged up Clemento’s neck, his forked tongue flicking frantically.

"Boss! Ease off the gas!" Snarly hissed, his voice trembling. "Look out the window! That’s Judge Juniper’s carriage rollin' by the courthouse! Remember what he said? He told Sheriff Hogg if he has to arrest you one more time, it’s 'The Big House' for life! No more pool, no more leather jackets, just orange jumpsuits and hay for breakfast!"

Clemento’s fist stopped mid-air. He could practically feel the cold steel of the handcuffs and see Judge Juniper's grumpy donkey face shaking his head.

He slowly lowered his hand and began dusting off the boar’s shoulder with a fake, menacing smile. "You... you got lucky today, Porky. I just remembered I got a very important appointment with... uh... my tailor. Yeah. But don't go nowhere. I'm keepin' my eye on you, see?"

He grabbed his cue ball and headed for the back door, Snarly tucked tight. "Let's go, Snarly. This town’s gettin' too hot for a couple of entrepreneurs like us."

Now that they've avoided the fight, they need a "brainy" way to get back at the boar without getting caught by the donkey lawmen.

What’s the "Clemento Plan"? Is he going to rig the boar's motorcycle or maybe lure him into a trap that makes it look like the boar started the mess?

Clemento stood in the alleyway behind the pool hall, kicking a dumpster in frustration. "I coulda taken 'im, Snarly! That overgrown bacon-strip didn't stand a chance!"

Snarly poked his head out of the leather jacket, his eyes wide. "Boss, you almost got us 'L-I-F-E' in the donkey jail! You gotta admit, you lost your cool. You made a mistake steerin' into that fight."

Clemento scoffs and fixes his cap. "A mistake? Me? Get outta here! I was 'strategically de-escalatin',' capiche? That boar is lucky I’m a nice guy today. I don't make mistakes, I just have 'unplanned successes.' If Sheriff Hogg wants to arrest me, he's gonna have to work for it!"

Clemento stops kicking the dumpster. He looks at his bruised knuckles, then at the courthouse where Judge Juniper is probably waiting. He sighs—a deep, gravelly Bronx sigh.

Clemento stood in the shadows of the alley, the neon sign of the pool hall flickering against his leather jacket. He looked at his paws, then at Snarly, and let out a heavy, gravelly sigh.

"Alright, look... maybe I pushed it too far with that boar. I almost traded our freedom for a chance to punch a pig. That's on me, kid. My bad, capiche?"

The words hung in the desert air for a second. Clemento’s eyes went wide. He froze, his snout twitching in horror.

"Wait... did I just say that out loud?" Clemento barked, his Bronx accent going up an octave. "Capiche?! Did I just apologize to a reptile in a dumpster-fire alleyway?!"

He grabbed the brim of his cap and yanked it down over his eyes. "Look what you made me do, Snarly! You made me go soft! Me! Clemento! The brains, the muscle, the toughest wolf from the Grand Concourse to the Mojave!"

Snarly just blinked, a tiny, smug hiss escaping his scales.

"Don't you hiss at me, ya long-winded shoelace!" Clemento growled, pointing a menacing claw. "Remind me to kick your butt later, capiche? I gotta re-establish my reputation. If Sheriff Hogg or Judge Juniper heard me catchin' feelings, I'd never live it down. Now, let's get movin' before I start hirin' a therapist!"

The dust was settling as the three donkeys—Sheriff Hogg, Deputy Dapple, and the stern Judge Juniper—trotted back into the town square. They found the pool hall in a shambles and Gully the Boar nursing a bruised ego.

Clemento stood on the courthouse steps, his leather jacket zipped tight. He looked at Snarly, who gave a nervous rattle.

"Step aside, wolf," Sheriff Hogg huffed, reaching for his cuffs. "I heard about the 'Bronx Welcome' you gave the pool hall. Judge Juniper’s got a cell with your name on it."

Clemento took a deep breath. "Hold your horses—er, donkeys—Sheriff," he growled, his Bronx accent steady. "The pig was lookin' for trouble, yeah. But I’m the one who let it get outta hand. I’m the brains of this outfit, and the brains says... I messed up. Capiche?"

The whole town gasped. Even Judge Juniper’s long ears twitched in surprise.

"You’re... owning up to it?" Deputy Dapple asked, his eyes wide.

"Yeah, yeah, don't make a big thing out of it," Clemento snapped, looking away. "I'm a tough guy, not a liar."

The Sentence

Judge Juniper cleared his throat with a loud, gravelly bray. "Well, Clemento... since you actually had the 'moxie' to own up to your mistakes, I’m gonna go easy on ya. A slap on the wrist and twenty hours of scrubbin' the graffiti off the water tower. Case closed!"

Judge Juniper looked from the smashed pool cues to the wolf’s honest face. He let out a long, loud bray. "Well, Clemento... in this town, honesty is rarer than rain. Since you didn't make us chase you across the desert, I’m giving you a slap on the wrist and fifty hours of community service—painting the town hall."

The Aftermath

As the donkeys walked away, Clemento turned to Snarly. "See? Brains, kid. I played 'em like a fiddle."

Snarly hissed a laugh. "You went soft, boss. Admit it."

"I didn't go soft! I'm... I'm an actor! A performer!" Clemento yelled as he grabbed a paintbrush. "And don't you forget what I said—I'm still gonna kick your butt for makin' me do this later, capiche?!"